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*Helps Heavenward*  
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# Ten to One

*And Other Papers*

# Helps Heavenward

Edited by  
W. L. Watkinson  
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## PREFACE

THE greatest *Helps Heavenward* are three:—the Spirit of God, the Son of God, the Book of God.

The last two adopt in large measure the same method. The Son of God has left for record the life of a perfect man. The Book of God provides innumerable biographies of men of faith.

The following pages have recourse to a different part of the same field. They leave the Divine Biography and the biographies of Bible-saints, and draw attention to the higher experiences and expressions of several of the more remarkable saints and martyrs since the times of the Bible.

In the writer's experience he has found nothing more powerful to interest, to

cheer, to inspire, and uplift than the records of the discoveries and experiences of the saints of God. For even the Gospels are such a record. It is his earnest prayer that these selections may prove of spiritual profit to many brother-souls.

ADDINGHAM, *April* 1899.

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## CHAPTER I

### Ten to One

“Ten looks at Christ for one at self.”

Is this the motto of some visionary mystic,  
of one who sings—

Upon the bosom of my Lord  
I sink in blissful dreams away,  
And visions of eternal day?

No, it is the advice of one of the saintliest and most indefatigable of Puritan preachers. In forty-two years he wrote one hundred and sixty-eight works, many of them elaborate and full of learning; on the average, four each year. He devoted two days a week to family catechising and conference, and spent about one hour with each family.

But, all the time, this active preacher and author was so delicate in health that, at first, he could not rise before seven

in the morning and, afterwards, not till much later. When he had risen it took him an hour to dress, such was his infirmity of body. Another hour had to be spared for a walk before dinner, and another before supper. Nor could he, as a rule, study after supper.

Such was the infirmity and the practical activity of the famous Richard Baxter,—one of the most unselfish and useful Christians that England has seen.

But he was too wise to suppose that his exceptional labours could atone for the secret faultiness of his life and spirit. He knew that true cheerfulness was not to be obtained by looking into his heart or thinking of his labours. “Ten looks at Christ for one at self,” he wrote.

He knew that it was needful to examine oneself and detect one’s weaknesses and sins. But he knew also that if this formed the bulk of one’s meditations, moroseness and hopelessness would be the result. *Therefore* he recommended that, when one’s unworthiness had been fairly recognised, a fairer and healthier subject of meditation should be chosen.

FROM SELF TURN TO CHRIST. Think

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of Him—His beauty, His wisdom, the sufficiency of His grace, the tenderness of His love—ten times more than you think of self. If I have given one look at self, it is no more than just that I should give ten looks at HIM.

Such is the wisdom of the almost martyr, Richard Baxter. And such is the desire of God the Father and God the Son.

“Look unto ME, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth” (Isa. xlv. 22).

“Come unto ME, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. xi. 28).



## CHAPTER II

### *Sorsaken*

**“Patience in suffering is greater than calling the dead to life.”**

“Never was there so much gazing at a knight who has come off well at a tournament, as there is gazing of all the heavenly host at a man who comes off well in suffering.”

THESE words were written by a Dominican monk some two hundred years before the Reformation, in the Dark Ages, the days of superstition and supposed miracle-working. Henry Suso of Suabia he is called, and he had many a notable experience. The following incident is particularly memorable.

He had discovered the love of Jesus, and he preached it far and wide. “The first lesson in the school of wisdom,” he

used to say, "is the lesson taught in the open book of the crucified Jesus. Read that page and ask yourselves, Were a man to give all he had, even if he had the whole world to give, could he ever be to Jesus that which Jesus has been to him?"

From Switzerland to the Netherlands, in towns and villages, on hills and among the woods, this touching message was preached.

But in his wanderings he met a poor fallen woman. He reclaimed her, and from time to time helped her with little gifts. She relapsed. He ceased to visit and help her. In revenge, she reported far and near that Father Henry was a man of evil life. His brother monks believed it; his friends turned away from him in shame.

One companion whom he specially loved taunted him bitterly. Henry besought him lovingly, and said it was an evil thing to trample on him who was down, but if all friends forsook him, THERE REMAINED FOR HIM THE HEART OF JESUS.

"It is all over with you," answered

his friend. "None will listen now to your preaching, and all men will cast away your books and read them no more."

Shortly after, Father Henry retired to his quiet chapel, and in the depths of his soul he heard a voice that said, "Hear a comfortable word that I will read to thee. And this is the word: '*Thou shalt no more be termed FORSAKEN*; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: for THE LORD DELIGHTETH IN THEE.'"

Such is the promise of Isaiah (lxii. 4). It brought comfort to his heart, and, after a long struggle, the Bishop and Inquisitors sifted the case and vindicated his innocence. Then said he often, "O Lord, how true is the word that Thou hast spoken: 'If God be for us, who shall be against us?'"

Yes, this it was that sustained him in the hour of evil report—

FORSAKEN ! THE LORD DELIGHTETH  
IN THEE.

Let us with sincerity place ourselves in

the hands of Christ and we shall have the unspeakable privilege of saying to ourselves, "Forsaken I may be, but God delighteth in me."

## CHAPTER III

### Cracked Groats

“One day, as I was passing in the field, this sentence fell upon my soul : *Thy righteousness is in heaven* ; and methought withal I saw with the eyes of my soul Jesus Christ at God’s right hand ; there, I say, as my righteousness ; so that wherever I was, or whatever I was a-doing, God could not say of me, *He wants* [*i.e.* he lacks] *My righteousness*, for that was just before Him. My righteousness was Jesus Christ Himself. Now went I home rejoicing for the grace and love of God. I lived for some time very sweetly at peace with God through Christ. Oh ! methought, Christ ! Christ ! It was glorious to me to see the worth and prevalency of all His benefits. How could I look from myself to Him, and would reckon all **those graces of God** that now were green in me, were yet but like those **cracked groats** and fourpence-halfpennies that rich men carry in their purses, when their gold is in their trunk at home ! Oh, I saw **my gold was in my trunk at home !** In Christ my Lord and Saviour ! Now **Christ was my all.**”

SUCH was the experience of John Bunyan about the year 1653. Look what became of him. Seven years after, he was the first that was cast into prison by the Royalist persecutors. He was examined before the Justice, and, says he, "As I was going forth of the doors, I had much ado to forbear saying to them (the Justice and the lawyer) that I CARRIED THE PEACE OF GOD ALONG WITH ME; but I held my peace, and, blessed be the Lord, went away TO PRISON WITH GOD'S COMFORT IN MY POOR SOUL."

In seven weeks' time this dauntless young Puritan, some thirty-two years of age, and one of England's wisest and noblest teachers, received this sentence: "If after such a day as shall be appointed you to be gone, you shall be found in this realm, *you must stretch by the neck for it.*"

He was a spiritual hero. But here was the ground of his steadiness and comfort.

1. My goodness is the cracked groat I carry about in the world.

2. Christ's goodness is my gold in the trunk at home.

He had learned from St. Paul (1 Cor. i. 30) that "Christ Jesus . . . of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

## CHAPTER IV

### **Rusty Souls**

“The servant of God who is troubled for any reason must immediately have recourse to prayer, and **remain** in the presence of his Heavenly Father **till the joy of salvation has been restored** to him. Otherwise, his sadness will increase and engender **A RUST IN THE SOUL**. . . . If the servant of Christ becomes sad, bitter, or unhappy, sooner or later that soul will be overwhelmed by its sadness or will seek for false joys or consolations.”

WHO wrote these words? One who worshipped joy? An Epicurean? A worldly prelate? No, but one who forfeited life's ambitions, wealth, taste, all, for Christ.

St. Francis was on the road to military glory when he thought he heard the voice of God. At once he flung aside his hopes. He willingly abandoned all his



father's wealth and all the innocent gaiety of an Italian life for the sake of serving Christ and man. He knew what sacrifice was, and gladly sank to the deepest depths of humility, shame, pain.

But, in spite of all, he knew that Christianity means joy. He insisted that his friars should give up everything for Christ, but he went farther. At one of their gatherings he had an inscription written out in large letters and posted up :  
LET THE BRETHREN AVOID EVER APPEAR-  
ING SOMBRE. LET THEM ALWAYS BE  
FOUND JOYFUL IN THE LORD, GAY,  
AMIALE, GRACIOUS—AS IS FITTING.

St. Francis and St. Paul both hated rust in the soul (Phil. iv. 4): "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice."

In his last days St. Francis suffered such pain that one of his friends thought that God was unjust, and said, "Truly He ought to let His hand weigh less heavily upon you." The saint replied, "What ! you have the audacity to blame God's dealings with me !" He threw himself on his knees and poured out the secret of his heart : "Oh, my Lord God !

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I give Thee thanks for all these pains.  
I willingly accept all afflictions. *Thy Holy  
Name is my superabundant joy.*"

He followed his own teaching. He had "immediate recourse to prayer"; made sure of the restoration of the joy of his salvation. There can be no rust in the soul when one can say sincerely, "Thy Name is my SUPERABUNDANT JOY."

## CHAPTER V

### Ten Thousand Lives

“My heart bleeds over the wretchedness which meets my eye. **Had I ten thousand lives I would gladly give them all away** to help to raise these degraded ones.”

So wrote Fidelia Fiske when her ship touched at Smyrna, in 1843, and she saw the moral degradation of the people. She was nearly twenty-seven years old, and since her conversion, at the age of fifteen, had worked steadily for Christ. But in the preceding year, 1842, she felt called upon to devote herself to foreign work, and set forth to become a missionary teacher in Persia.

She reached Smyrna on her way, and the yearning that expressed itself in the words quoted above had a long opportunity of showing itself in Persia. For sixteen

years she laboured there with constant courage and constant prayerfulness. After leading large numbers of Persians to the Saviour, she returned to America. Four or five years more were allowed to her, and she pled and prayed with numberless friends, until the dawn of Heaven broke upon their souls. It would be impossible to number the souls that she comforted and saved. Her biographer declares that nothing less can be said of her than that she left behind her *a pattern of life*.

The spring of her usefulness and beauty is easily discovered. It betrays itself in the words quoted at the head of this chapter. She had exactly the feeling of St. Paul when he wrote (see R. V.): **"Most gladly will I spend and be spent for your souls, although the more I love the less I be loved."**

How many of us could follow Miss Fiske in this Christian speculation? What should I do if I had *ten* lives? *A hundred* lives? Humbly but earnestly she cries, "My heart bleeds over the wretchedness which meets my eye. Had

I *ten thousand* lives, I would gladly give them all away to help."

How was it that she felt so powerfully the needs of others? It was because she prayed so much and submitted herself to the influence of Christ's Spirit. So it was that she came to have the feeling that often filled the Saviour's heart (Matt. ix. 36): "When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion, because they were as sheep having no shepherd."

Oh that Christians would draw out their souls to the hungry! Then would their light arise in obscurity and their very darkness be as the noonday.

## CHAPTER VI

### God on His Throne

“I never undertake any more work than I can get through with perfect calmness of spirit. . . .  
**I am discontented with nothing. I see God sitting upon His throne, and ruling all things well.**”

MRS. OLIPHANT had but scant sympathy with the writer of the words quoted, but she is forced to declare that “never has man laboured more hardly, more constantly, with greater devotion or steadiness. . . . Silent, good men then, as at all times, were sadly moving about the world, keeping their little lamps alight, giving of their oil to none. Wesley threw his, kindled and glowing, into the wide country. He awoke the Church and the race—he made religion a fact too visible to be denied, and changed the spiritual complexion and tenor of his age.”

The spirit of his work demands our attention. Calmness and faith. Never attempting too much; never forgetting that God was on His throne. He could have said with the youthful and heroic Milton (age, twenty-three years),—

All is, if I have grace to use it so,  
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.

The simplicity of this trust in God's supremacy is one great fount of cheerfulness. Wendell Holmes is to many the favourite among modern writers. But how sad he was in his secret heart!

"Outside, I laugh," he said; "inside, I never laugh. It is impossible. The world is too sad."

Had he been able to join the two glorious Johns—Milton and Wesley—in their brave faith in God, he would have been able to obey the exhortation of the Psalmist: "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." There *is* sadness in the world, but it is a sadness that will not live for ever. It is educative, and therefore temporary. The day will come when, as

---

a redeemed race we shall put away childish things. Then shall we enter into the everlastings,—the everlasting joy, the everlasting love, the everlasting light.

Of such things we cannot think too often. While we toil for the fallen and weep for the sufferer, let us never forget that God is on His throne, and that therefore weeping will endure for the night and joy will come in the morning.



## CHAPTER VII

### *The Highest Good*

“Love ! love ! love ! highest good !”<sup>1</sup>

THESE words were written by one of the Black Friars. What the love was that he counted the best of all things is clear from the following sentences in the same hymn : —“ Have recourse to Jesus Christ. Have faith and hope that He will make thee strong. Thou canst not be conquered without thy will. Grace is more powerful than every adversity . . . **Have recourse to Jesus Christ.** . . . Thy mind shall taste the earnest of eternal life. **Thy heart shall feel rejoicing,** song, and feasting, singing : ‘ Love ! love ! love ! **highest good !** ’ ”

These are remarkable words, and the

<sup>1</sup> Amor, amore,—  
Amor, somma bonta.

man was as remarkable as his words. He was too good for the unreformed Catholics to tolerate. "Death! death to the Friar!" shouted the mob, and in the year 1498 the famous monk, Savonarola, was led forth to die.

He suffered first the shame of public degradation. One of his old pupils, now the Bishop of Vasona, stripped him of his monastic garb and pronounced the sentence, "I separate thee from the Church militant and triumphant."

"Militant, not triumphant," answered Savonarola.

He was led to the scaffold, and there he was asked by a priest, "With what mind dost thou bear this martyrdom?"

He replied, "THE LORD HAS SUFFERED AS MUCH FOR ME."

With such thoughts in his breast, the great Italian hero was first hanged and then burned. As he lived, so he died, believing that the love of Christ was the supreme and all-compensating joy. "Love! love! love! the highest good."

"Though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. xiii. 3).

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"Though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. xiii. 3).

“He that dwelleth (abideth) in love, dwelleth in God, and GOD in HIM” (1 Jn. iv. 14).

To have this higher indwelling of God is for us the highest good. Have recourse, then, to Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Thoughts of Joy

“The words of this hymn have **restored to me the same thoughts of joy** that possessed my soul in my sickness when I composed it.”

So used the famous Dr. Donne, King James the First's favourite preacher, to say to a friend when, in the year 1626, he heard the choristers in St. Paul's Cathedral singing his hymn. During his illness he had written these remarkable words :  
“Thy correction hath brought me to such a participation of Thy Self (Thy Self, O my God, cannot be parted), to such an entire possession of Thee, as that I DURST DELIVER MYSELF OVER TO THEE THIS MINUTE, if this minute Thou wouldest accept my dissolution. Preserve me, O my God, the God of constancy and perseverance, in that state from all relapses



into those sins which have induced Thy former judgments upon me."

The last verse of the hymn referred to runs thus—

I have a sin of fear, that when I've spun

My last thread, I shall perish on the shore ;  
But swear by Thyself, that at my death Thy  
Son

Shall shine as **He shines now**, and heretofore :

And having done that, Thou hast done.

**I fear no more.**

These words used to restore to him his "thoughts of joy," and he used to say further to his friend, as the organ and choir thus moved his soul, "O the power of church-music ; that harmony added to this hymn has raised the affections of my heart and quickened my grace of zeal and gratitude. **I observe that I always return from paying this public duty of prayer and praise to God with an unexpressible tranquillity of mind, and a willingness to leave the world.**"

Dr. Donne was renowned for his powers of solid judgment ; for "genuine sense and Roman strength of thought." But

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for the preservation of inward joy we note that he employed two methods—

1. The enjoyment of sacred music.
2. The renewal of his trust in the merits of God's Son.

Ps. cxlvii. 1—"Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely."

Ps. ciii. 3, 4—"Forget not His benefits who forgiveth all thine iniquities."

## CHAPTER IX

### **\*\* A Great Doer \*\***

MARTIN LUTHER was in one sense "a great doer." He was the most active of the Reformers, and probably the most useful of them.

But on one occasion he saw a patient sufferer. He felt humbled and condemned. With perfect honesty he exclaimed, "Who am I? who am I? A wordy preacher, in comparison with this **great doer!**"

And such is Christ's view. He loved—and longed for—active workers. "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers" (Matt. ix. 38). Such were His thoughts of the active Christian.

But turn to the Beatitudes. Activity, it is true, secures a place there. The active peacemakers are particularly blessed.

But the sufferers are *thrice* blessed. “Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek : for THEY shall inherit the earth. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you.” Surely, while Christ valued and prayed and longed for conscientious labourers in His vineyard, He regarded patient endurance as a still higher level of service.

Thirteen hundred years after, in the days of Pope Gregory the Ninth, this message seemed to come from God to Dante’s Matilda — “**Beyond all worship that can be offered Me is the patience that suffers.**”

If God so esteems the sufferer, surely we should glory rather than groan in our various tribulations.

## CHAPTER X

### **“ So Many Helpers ”**

**“ Thou hast brought to me so many helpers  
on my way to heaven.”**

SUCH were the words of one of the most remarkable women of her age—the ex-Béguine, Matilda of Helfde. She was born near Magdeburg in the year 1212, and was brought up under the influence of court life and knightly company. In her twelfth year she was greeted, she tells us, by the Holy Ghost, and never after could endure the thought of committing a great and deadly sin. “This blessed greeting was repeated day after day, and it filled me with love and sorrow.”

She was the best beloved of her friends and relations, but she renounced worldly honour and worldly riches, and in 1235

sought to enter a convent. - She was refused. In later years she testified with great boldness against the ignorance and superstition of the priests. In her youth her spirit was probably of the same cast, and for that reason she would be excluded from the Magdeburg convent.

She entered the persecuted order of the Béguines. They were in constant intercourse with the Waldensians, and in the course of the following century were practically exterminated, although their name and houses were taken over by an order of strictly Roman Catholic nuns.

For thirty years Matilda wandered about as a Béguine, and at length, when she was fifty-three years old, she entered the convent of Helfde. There she obtained peace and love, and there she finished her great books. The great poet, Dante, seems to have taken her as his heroine and to have been deeply influenced by her writings. She lived till the year 1277, and, during those last twelve years of quiet, she wrote the words quoted at the head of this chapter.

In a beautiful parable she tells how the love of God appeared to her as a noble,

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royal maiden, and gave her several hand-maidens to wait upon her—First, True Repentance, then the maiden called Humility, then Gentleness, Obedience, Tenderness (who was to give her help in tending the sick); the beloved damsel, Purity; Patience, Holiness, Hope; and the glorious and holy maiden called Faith; Watchfulness, Contentment, Wisdom (the mistress of the maidens), Bashfulness, Fear, and Constancy.

Have we not been helped by such inspirations of the love of God? Well may we exclaim with the wise Matilda, “O thou dear love of God, I thank Thee that Thou hast brought to me so many helpers on my way to heaven!”

## CHAPTER XI

### *Death will be Life*

“Have you any fear of death?”

“It will be life to me.”

IN November 1864 Mrs. Warner, the first Bible-woman in Beckenham, died of cancer. By the world she would be counted a very ordinary woman. In the eye of Christ she was a “precious jewel.”

Her career and experiences are perhaps uniquely instructive. She was born in 1820, and at the age of thirty was left a widow with only slender means to support her young boy and two step-children.

Her father was taken seriously ill, and in praying for and with him both she and he found peace with God, for Christ says, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”



A season of poverty followed, and one day she was greatly downcast. She took up her Bible, and happily it opened at the passage, "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." It scattered her darkness, and she was able to reply with thankfulness, "Enough: my Father careth for me. I am satisfied."

Her difficulties gradually passed away. Her step-children became old enough to support themselves, and she herself was placed beyond the reach of want. But now that her domestic struggle was over, she was ready to enter into the world-struggle, the conflict between sin and the Father. Her loving spirit, gentle superiority of manner, and chastened decision of character admirably qualified her for the work of Bible-woman, and she was appointed to Beckenham in 1862.

Her work was fruitful but short-lived. In the winter of 1863 fever prevailed in the village. She nursed the sick night and day, and when spring came her strength was spent. Cancer rapidly developed, and she was obliged to enter the hospital.

There she led many into the love of

Christ by her sweet patience as well as her gentle words.

"Do you feel the time long, Mrs. Warner?" asked one of her friends.

"Ah! no," she said; "**it's all my Father's time.**"

"Is prayer precious?"

"Yes; but it's all praise now."

Her pastor once asked her how she got through the weary nights? She replied, "They are often sleepless from the pain, but so happy. Last night I was thinking of the walk to Emmaus, and going all through it. It was so beautiful. The morning came too soon."

It was no wonder that one who kept God so continually in her thoughts should reply, when she was asked if she had any fear of death—

"I do not even think of the word; it will be life to me."

Her very last words, feeble in utterance but strong in beauty, were in keeping with her lovely life—

"My God! my God!"

To be with Him was life, for she could say with the Psalmist, "Thy loving-kindness is better than life."

Why should we fear death? It is sad to leave our loved ones behind, but they are in better keeping than *ours*. If God was wise enough to lead *us* to the Cross, is He not wise enough to lead *them*?

**Why should we fear death? It is life.** Fourteen hundred years before this humble Christian perished—so the world phrases it—the aged St. Basil was sustained by exactly the same assurance. To his persecutor he exclaimed fearlessly—

“To kill *me* is to send me to glory.”

**Why should we fear glory?**—Why should we fear the rest that comes to the weary? Why should we fear to be with Christ, “who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood”?

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us”; and it is the privilege of every Christian to say with this gentle though obscure saint—

“DEATH . . . WILL BE LIFE TO ME.”

## CHAPTER XII

### *The Blessedness of Christ's Love*

**“If those who persecute us did but know the  
blessedness of the love of Christ—”**

SUCH was the frequent testimony of the Malagasy Christians who survived the storm of cruelty that raged against them in the middle years of the present century. In the space of twenty-six years (1831-1857) they endured four severe persecutions, and scarcely a year passed without some of their number suffering. But in 1835, penalties were inflicted on no less than two thousand five hundred. In 1845 great numbers suffered. In 1849 four nobles were burned alive, thirteen martyrs were hurled down a precipice, and more than two thousand were punished in other ways. In 1857

thirteen Christians were stoned to death, more than fifty were fastened together in heavy fetters, causing the death of twenty-six, or more.

Yet what was the result of this barbarism? The Christians increased from one thousand to seven thousand. Such was the fruit of six and twenty years of persecution!

What, then, was it that upheld them during this quarter-century of ceaseless danger? It was the thought often expressed to their missionary, Ellis. He visited them in 1856, during a temporary lull in the persecutions. They said to him—

“If those who persecute us did but know the blessedness of the love of Christ, they would love Him too, and save instead of destroying those who believe in His name.”

There we have the central element of a strong Christian life. It consists in sincerely and habitually realising the blessedness of Christ's love.

“He loves me.” Cannot that thought dispel every mist of sin? Am I tempted to sensuality, to self-assertion, to vanity,

to anger? Let me but think of Christ's love and whisper to my soul, "Art thou ready to grieve Him by rendering thyself less and less worthy of His tender love?"

What can better brace the drooping heart than the remembrance how dearly He loves us, how His thoughts to usward are more than can be numbered? This is indeed the premier definition of a Christian life—it is the permeating of our thoughts and affections with the blessedness of the Lord's love toward us.

Each morning that we bathe our souls in this truth—He loves me, even me, with a spotless and everlasting love!—it renews our steadfast adherence to His words and service. Herein is the root of the perseverance of the better saints, even in their remembrance of His love. True Christianity is a study of blessedness, an experiment in joy, a feast of love.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ***\*\*The Lord Himself wrote it\*\****

“The Lord Himself wrote it, and I was the humblest of instruments in His hand.”

SUCH is Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's description of the appearance of the wonderful book—in some respects the most wonderful fiction of the century—*Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

She was a poor minister's daughter who wedded a professor still poorer, and for many years her home was on the borders of the Slave State of Kentucky. One fugitive after another found refuge at her modest dwelling, and they either remained or were sped on their journey towards safety and freedom. Their tales of suffering so harrowed her soul that the “sum of all villainies,” slavery, became to her a horror, a nightmare, that lay like lead

on her heart, and shadowed her life with sorrow. This was the first preparation.

In 1849, in the cholera epidemic, she lost her youngest child, and she wrote words that shine with meaning to us: "In depths of sorrow that seemed to me immeasurable, it was *my only prayer to God that such anguish might not be suffered in vain*. . . . I felt I could never be consoled, unless this crushing of my own heart might enable me to work out some great good to others." This was the second preparation.

It was at this period in her history that the great call came to her. Her poverty had compelled her to supplement the family income by writing slight stories and sketches. A new and cruel *Fugitive Slave Law* had just come into force. It enabled the slave-hunters to seize their victims in States where there was no slavery. Her sister-in-law wrote to her: "If I could use a pen as you can, I would write something that would make this nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is." When she read the



words she rose up, and, with a strange look on her face, crushed the letter in her hand and said, with determination, "I will write something; I will, if I live."

For weeks she carried the thought about with her, and at last, as she was partaking of the Lord's Supper, in the month of February 1851, the vision of the death of "Uncle Tom" flashed through her mind. It so affected her that she could scarcely refrain from weeping aloud. Immediately she reached her home she committed the stirring history to paper, gathered her family about her, and read it to them. Her two children burst into tears, and one of them cried, "O mamma! slavery is the most cruel thing in the world."

From this mighty scene—mighty not only in its conception and in its power to touch the heart still, but gloriously mighty, too, in the share that it took in ending slavery in the North American States—she worked her way back, and with consummate skill constructed the chapters that led up to the telling crisis.

In twelve months, three hundred thousand copies of the book were sold in the United States alone; the demand continued to increase in America and in England, until in the latter country no less than forty editions passed through the press.

It was of this work that she said, "The Lord Himself wrote it, and I was but the humblest of instruments in His hand." She disclaimed the honour of producing it, for she was assured that it was none less than the Divine Spirit who had fired her mind, and for years had led her in such a path, that at last she had no choice but write the history-making story.

The Lord Himself wrote it. Was it not true? "By Him all things consist." "Every good and perfect gift cometh from the Father of Lights." As General Gordon put it, "All the beauty of our life is His."

Why, then, should we not regard *our* best deed in this way? "The Lord did it." "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And not only our best deeds but *every good deed should be so regarded.*

Oh that with true gratefulness we could say of all the morality and honesty of our life, "By the grace of God I am what I am!"

## CHAPTER XIV

### The Best Help—Ill-usage

“The best helps to growth in grace are the ill-usage, the affronts, and the losses which befall us.”

THIS is a lesson extremely difficult to accept. If we ponder it, it is easy enough to see that it is true. But the heart rebels so instinctively against injustice, that it is a lesson that needs to be learned over and over again by most Christians.

Happily, the wisest of saints have spoken with wonderful plainness and agreement on this subject. John Wesley, the cheerful organising genius of the eighteenth century—one who counted it as sinful to fret as to swear—wrote the words above quoted in his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. It is clear from such words how practical and wise was

the idea that *he* cherished of Christian perfection. It was not in ill-timed correction of others, nor in uncharitable judgments of those who say little but try to do the more. The perfection he believed in was in accepting the discipline of ill-usage meekly, cheerfully, lovingly.

Some five hundred years before Wesley's time, Dr. Tauler of Strasburg, a Catholic priest, but a true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, taught that Christians should **"receive all pleasure and all pain, not from the creatures of God, but from God Himself."** If the sun shines upon me, I should say, "This is one of God's good gifts." But if some one spitefully uses me, I should again say, "This is one of God's good gifts."

Some twelve hundred years before Tauler's day, when the aged Polycarp was dying at the stake, he lifted up his voice and cried, **"For all that has befallen me, I praise Thee."**

Perhaps still more pointed is the statement of William Struther, who was preacher of the gospel in Edinburgh in 1629. In one of his sermons he tells us, and tells us truly, "There is **nothing**

**more grievous** to man and **nothing more profitable** than affliction.”

Oh that we could join with the saints in such sentiments. Let us ask the help of the Spirit of wisdom and patience, that we may have a vision of God even in our wrongs ; that we may believe and rejoice that all things are working for our good, seeing that we love Him.

## CHAPTER XV

### Worth more than the Empire

“How happy I am to have given up so much for Him! This satisfaction is worth more than the empire of the world.”

THIS utterance comes from almost the unlikeliest quarter. Cheap words they might have been counted had they fallen from the lips of a martyr. One might have thought in secret, even if we shrank from expressing it, that a saintly confessor was not likely to know the sweets of power, nor to understand the satisfaction possible to one who wields an empire.

Happily, however, the words quoted were penned by one who had enjoyed an intimate and personal acquaintance with earthly pomp and influence. They were

written by Catherine, the ex-queen of Sweden, in a letter to her cousin, Count Wasenau.

She was the last of the famous Vasas—the royal family of Sweden. But, when she was twenty-eight years old, she insisted on leaving the throne and all its attractions. Probably her greatest reason was her secret determination to become a Roman Catholic. But, Protestants as we are, we might well sympathise with her in her great renunciation. Her action was not the wisest that can be conceived, but her motives were pure and lofty. It was impossible for a Catholic to reign in Protestant Sweden; and, after years of research and doubt, she had been startled by the teaching of Cicero, that there could not be more than one true religion, but that all might be false. Over this she pondered for many days, and like John Henry Newman and many others she appears to have come to the conclusion, that reason could give her no satisfaction, and she would therefore embrace that religion which allows the least exercise for the faculty that had so grievously disappointed her.



Her abdication was one of the strangest facts of history. In one or two cases mighty monarchs have resigned, but not in their prime. Diocletian and Charles v. gave up their thrones when they had been exhausted by the fatigues of a long reign. But she, with life before her, lifted the crown from her head and retired into private life.

There is little question that soon after she regretted what she had done. But the step was irrevocable, and at the end of her long life—she lived for sixty-three years—she viewed it from the best and loftiest standpoint.

Just before she left the throne she wrote—

“I have possessed power without pride, and I relinquish it without regret. Do not fear for me, my wealth is beyond the power of fortune, I am happy whatever may chance. . . . **I shall be happy when I believe that I have no reason to fear anything from man nor from God.**”

To this view she returned thirty-two years after. In the year 1686 she wrote to her cousin the interesting letter

in which occur these magnificent sentences—

*“Give bravely the little that you have to God, and do not fear to lose by it; He will repay you with usury, for God is so good, that He rewards us, although we only give Him what is already His own.*

*“What glory and pleasure to serve so good a Master, and how happy I am to have given up so much for Him: this satisfaction is worth more than the empire of the world. . . . Pray God to lead you to do what is most to His glory and to your own happiness.”*

Her history is a remarkable illustration of the great saying, that it is easy to be happy when you have learned to renounce. This is by no means an easy lesson. But it is one of the noblest, and we should do well to bear in mind constantly the still greater saying of Him who saved a world by renouncing His all, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Queen Catherine illustrates the Saviour’s words, for she tells us what the “blessedness” is. She says, that the happy

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satisfaction of having given well is "worth more than the empire of the world." She knew what this meant. Christ knew what it meant. Surely, then, it is *more* blessed to give.

## CHAPTER XVI

### Everything for Everybody for Nothing

THE architect of Bunker's Hill Monument was Solomon Willard, and he is described as being of so generous a disposition that he always wanted to do everything for everybody for nothing.

What a delightful character ! Yet it was simply the beauty of the Lord his God that dwelt upon him. For God is love ; and that means, it is the delight of the great God to do everything for everybody for nothing.

Take one illustration. Every harvest field is the result of a free gift of warm, bright weather. Let the scientist examine this gift. He will tell you that the amount of energy expended in giving one-fourth of the surface of France a sunny harvest

is equivalent to the work done by five hundred and sixty milliards of men during that time. Five hundred and sixty milliards of men means a number five times greater than the human race! To bring to maturity the crops of a single harvest in one-fourth part of the country we call France, God has to exert as much strength as would tax a race five times the size of ours!

And who thinks of this mighty gift of sunshine as it is poured lavishly upon us? Barely a single soul. Many men sulk when their labours are not recognised and praised, and they threaten to cease working unless they are better appreciated. Not so the God of heaven. He "gives to the unthankful." **Every year He does everything for everybody for nothing.**

Is it a wonder that He tells us that He delights in a cheerful, a hilarious giver? He rejoices when He finds a man like-minded with Himself, and Solomon Willard must have been one of those that "He set apart for Himself."

Shall we seek to live this life of lavish love? It is not so hard if we go on the

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right lines. "The fruit of the Spirit is LOVE." That Spirit can shed abroad God's rich love in our hearts and make us like Him. Oh let us shrink from thwarting His purpose by mercenary calculation and prudent hard-heartedness. Let us in this matter, above all others, "Be perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect."

## CHAPTER XVII

### **Stronger than Satan**

**“I desire the grace of gentleness, whereby the Prince of this world is brought to nought.”**

ONE might suppose that these were the words of some tame soul, ready to suffer but not bold to dare or conquer. In actual fact, they were written by St. Ignatius, an ardent devoted soul, brimming over with sanctified passion. Looking forward to the lions and tigers that were to rend him in pieces in Rome, he wrote with grim courage, “May I have joy of the beasts that have been prepared for me. I pray that I may find them prompt. Nay, I will entice them, that they may devour me promptly, not as they have done to some, refusing to touch them through fear.”

These were not the words of an imagination slow to realise the agonies impending. Yet note the words that follow—"Come fire, and iron, and grapplings with wild beasts, cuttings and manglings, wrenching of bones, hacking of limbs, crushing of my whole body; come cruel tortures of the devil to assail me—only be it mine to attain unto Jesus Christ. **Better to die for Christ than rule over farthest kingdoms.**"

Here was an heroic soul. But he felt that the one grace that would put the Evil One to confusion was the grace of gentleness. "I desire the grace of gentleness whereby the Prince of this world is brought to nought." He saw what **the crowning privilege of the Christian is—to suffer gently.**

Christ Himself taught the martyr his lesson. Blessed are the *meek*, for they shall inherit the earth. The earth—at present the kingdom of the Prince of Evil, "the Prince of this world"—will be overrun by the meek. They are appointed to conquer. The meek shall inherit. Let us never, then, forget the power we can wield by suffering gently.



“Unto you it is GIVEN in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also TO SUFFER for His sake” (Phil. i. 29).

“The fruit of the Spirit is . . . GENTLENESS” (Gal. v. 22).

## CHAPTER XVIII

### Ride Forth

**“Listen, soldier of Christ! Ride forth  
beside the Lord Jesus, defend the truth,  
and win the martyr’s crown.”**

THESE words were written by the great painter, Albert Dürer. In the year 1519 his friend the Emperor Maximilian died, and he felt it necessary to make a long and expensive journey to the Netherlands. While he was there he heard that Martin Luther had disappeared. We know now that he had been kidnapped by friends, and was in safe keeping in the Wartburg. But only a few at that time knew the secret, and when the artist heard of the reformer’s disappearance he wrote sad words in his *Netherland Journal*, which it is well for us to read and ponder to-day.

“So this man has disappeared. Have

they murdered him? I do not know. If he has suffered, it is for the Christian truth against the unchristian Papacy, which **works against the freedom of Christ**, exacting from us blood and sweat, therewith to nourish itself in idleness, while the people famish. It is very sad and heavy to me that God allows so much false teaching and blindness and men we call fathers, and permits the excellent worth of religion to be falsified and removed.

“God of Heaven, have pity on us!

“**O God, never were men so cruelly put down under human laws as under those of the Roman chair**, men who, redeemed by Thy precious blood, **ought to be free Christians.**

“If we have lost this man, who has written more clearly than any other has done for the last hundred and forty years—since Wycliffe—we beseech Thee, O Heavenly Father, to bestow Thy Holy Spirit once more upon one who will **gather together again from all parts Thy holy Christian Church**, so that we may again live together in Christian unity.”

Then he turned wistfully to the great Erasmus, with the touching appeal that heads this chapter.

“Listen, soldier of Christ! Ride forth beside the Lord Jesus, defend the truth, and win the martyr’s crown. And if thou here below becomest like thy Master, Christ, and sufferest shame from lying tongues, and shouldst even die a little while sooner, then wilt thou **sooner pass from death unto life.** O Erasmus, stand by us!”

There are two things noteworthy in these pathetic words. There is the true Protestant ring in them and the true Church ring.

In our day it is well to be reminded by those who had just escaped from the thralldom of the Papacy what it really means. It was not simply darkness and superstition, but it was captivity to selfish laws, harsher than the laws of tyrants. Oh that intelligent Christians in our day would learn from such as Dürer, that they are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and ought to be **FREE CHRISTIANS**, praying not to saints but to Christ, confessing not to priests but to God.

Noteworthy, also, is the Church ring in those words. Freedom was insisted on by the sturdy Protestant, but it is not a freedom that in his view would lead to a thousand independent schisms. The reformer he prayed for was one who should "gather together the holy Christian Church from all parts" into a true, free, Christian unity. Should not *we* pray for such men? Can we do better than echo the prayer of the saintly painter?—" *O Heavenly Father, bestow Thy Holy Spirit on those who will gather together the fragments of Thy Church, and enable us all to live together in Christian love.*"

And to every young Christian the appeal to Erasmus should come with power. "Listen, soldier of Christ! Ride forth beside the Lord Jesus, defend the truth."

This is exactly what the young need to do to-day. We have had a wave of charity and intellectual breadth, and the result has been that where people differ it has become the custom to sacrifice truth for peace, to say, "Let us push into the background our crotchets, our creeds, our differences." All this is desirable at times, but we are in danger now of so overdoing

it, that Papal figments threaten to take the place of truth.

The falsehood of Romanism culminates in this, that it fatally dishonours the world's Saviour. It denies that Christ died once for all, "finishing" His work, and it teaches that priests must continually renew and supplement that sacrifice.

Four hundred years ago men came to see this. In 1528 died the first reformer of Scotland, the most zealous and the most courteous of evangelists, Patrick Hamilton. Before this young nobleman of twenty-three years of age was burned, he was judged in the Cathedral at St. Andrews. He was charged with having said that it was lost labour to pray to the saints, and "in especial to the Virgin Mary, or John, James, Peter, or Paul, as mediators to God for us."

The young nobleman replied, "I say with Paul, there is no Mediator betwixt God and man but Christ Jesus His Son; and whatsoever they be that call or pray to any saint departed, **they spoil Jesus of His office.**"

And for this truth — along with its associated truths—he died in the flames.

Like Christ, he felt himself bound to "defend the truth," even at the cost of life.

"Art thou a king, then?" asked Pilate.

"Thou sayest that I am a king," answered Jesus (John xviii. 36). **"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, THAT I SHOULD BEAR WITNESS UNTO THE TRUTH."**

Will you ride forth with Jesus? Will you defend the truth and win the martyr's crown? God help you!

## CHAPTER XIX

### I have Avenged Myself

“I am not out of my mind. I have avenged myself on these my enemies, who kept me in such slavery that I cared more for money than for God.”

THESE words will perplex those who are ignorant of the circumstances in which they were spoken. It was about the year 1173. Peter Waldo had been so successful in trading that he had become rich. But, as he confessed to a master of theology in the Cathedral at Lyons, *in having so many goods he had lost all good*. He determined to get rid of his wealth, and made it known in the city that three times a week there would be a regular distribution of bread, meat, and vegetables. They were times of dearth, and his munificence was timely and welcome.



At last, on the day of the Festival of the Assumption, August 15th, he came forth into the midst of the people and gave away all the money he had left, crying out, "No man can serve two masters, God and Mammon."

Then it was that while some approved, others derided, and some declared him to be out of his senses. He stood up before the multitude and thus defended himself—

"I am not out of my mind, as some of you think. I have avenged myself on these my enemies (his possessions), who kept me in such slavery that **I cared more for money than for God.** I know many blame me for doing this so publicly, but I did so both for my sake and for yours. For my own, that afterwards, if anyone sees me in the possession of money, he may say with truth that I am out of my mind; but also for your sake, that ye may learn to fix your hopes on God and not on riches."

It would not be wise for Christians to imitate this great evangelist literally, but it would be wise for them all to avenge themselves on their possessions. In the

sixteenth of Luke, Christ gives us practically the same advice—"Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness."

The danger of many goods is, that they are so likely to rob us of the joy of the highest good. As a rule, the richer people are the more artificial and conventional they are. It should not be so, but it is so. The richer people grow, the harder it becomes to give.<sup>1</sup> It should not be so, but it is so. Hence it has become proverbial that it is almost an impossibility for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Yet most people would like to be rich.

Well, we can test ourselves. Are we ready to avenge ourselves on that portion of the enemy, the mammon, that already belongs to us? Which are we the more anxious about—to keep our possessions, or increase our friends? If the wealthier we grow, the kinder we grow and the

<sup>1</sup> In Besant and Rice's *Golden Butterfly* it is said that a small £15 a year pays for a single boy being taken from the streets and trained as a respectable sailor. "A rich man might support a thousand of them. Yet no rich man does."

readier to befriend, then out of the unrighteous mammon we have made friends, and we have avenged ourselves on the enemy that threatened to destroy us.

Do I "care more for money than for God"? This is a searching question. Some there are, doubtless, who can honestly reply, Yes. But let each one make sure that he is not deceiving himself in this matter. Let us be ready to go even too far in giving rather than go too far in keeping or increasing goods. Let us make sure that we not only believe, but act according to the belief, that "it is more blessed, and more our actual delight, to give than to receive." For, until we have learned that lesson, we have failed to qualify for the glorious certificate, "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him. . . . As He is, so are we in this world."

*N.B.*—The other side of the subject of this chapter will be found in Chapter XXI.

## CHAPTER XX

### *Delightful!*

“How delightful is this work for Jesus!”

WHAT was this work? It was wading knee-deep through water to reach the scattered settlements in Florida.

The man who wrote these words was, to begin with, a plain man who worked in a brewery. He was godless and prayerless until he was converted at the age of twenty-eight, and then came a glorious change.

For three Sundays his young minister noticed that instead of encouraging him, by looking as usual at the speaker, he bent his head and hid his face. The young pastor did not like it, and asked why it was. This was the answer he received — “I am praying while you preach. To every appealing truth I say,

*'Lord, send that home; Lord, send that home.'*" "The preacher drove the nail with the gospel hammer, and he clinched it with believing prayer." God send a dozen such "clinchers" in every congregation!

He suffered four heavy bereavements, gave up his brewery work, accepted a post as colporteur for the American Tract Society, and became widely known as **UNCLE JOHN VASSAR**.

Two incidents ought to be related as characteristic of the heroic spirit of this humble Christian. After he had identified himself with the temperance cause, enemies arose. On one occasion he was pursued by two hundred men armed with clubs. They threatened his life, but he escaped through an hotel, and by a back way reached a church where a prayer-meeting was being held. He joined in prayer with great earnestness, and at the conclusion the pastor offered him his walking-stick, to defend himself against the mob. But Uncle John replied—

"Brother Goodwin, if the Lord wants John Vassar to-night, nothing can save

him. If He does not, all these men combined cannot hurt him."

The war between the Northern and Southern States broke out, and he went to the Federal Army, as agent for the Tract Society. A battle took place the next day, and he was taken prisoner, carried to the General, and examined. His answer was as frank as it was characteristic.

"I am a colporteur of the American Tract Society—to try and save the souls of the dear boys that fall around me daily. *General, do you love Jesus?*"

The General evaded the question by declaring that he knew the good old Society that sent him.

"But, my dear General, do you love Jesus?"

Those around intervened. "General," said they, "take the man's pledge, that he will not tell of our whereabouts for twenty-four hours, and let us see him out of our lines, *or we shall have a prayer-meeting from here to Richmond!*"

It was this brave soul who rejoiced in toil. In 1868 he went to Florida and found experiences rougher than any he

had yet encountered. This is how he describes them—

“I have waded through the water for miles, often knee-deep, to reach the scattered settlements. Last week, with James Middleton, an old pioneer Methodist, as guide, I attempted to reach St. John’s County, to establish a few schools. Sometimes for two miles at a stretch we went through water in the swamps, from six inches to two feet in depth. We kept up our courage, however, by singing—

‘No foot of land do I possess,  
No cottage in this wilderness.’

We made ten miles in five hours, and got to the end of our journey well-soaked. **How delightful is this work for Jesus!** As I lay out of doors all night last week, I praised Him aloud. ‘If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.’ Oh that we all might know the meaning of these words!”

Were such men multiplied by hundreds, how the Church of Christ would spread! Of such free-hearted, devoted souls it proves true that “labour is rest and pain is sweet.” It is a life to be envied, to feel

that our hardest toils are FOR CHRIST, and therefore delightful. Let us not rest until we can say of our bitterest tasks, "How delightful is this work for Jesus!"



## CHAPTER XXI

### Always Conquering

“God speaks of the things that are not, as though they were. So does faith. It sees the blessing of sanctification, and takes hold of the promise, and cries, ‘Through Christ, it is mine!’ . . . **It is His will that I should always conquer.** My Lord tells me in His word, ‘This is the victory by which we overcome, even our faith.’ *I must therefore use my weak faith, that it may grow stronger, which it certainly does by use.*

“First, ‘Jesus hath borne all my sins in His own body on the tree’; therefore they are atoned for, and the atonement is mine by believing.

“Secondly, ‘Christ is made unto me of the Father, sanctification.’”

THESE are the words of a devoted Christian lady who had the disadvantage of being well-to-do.<sup>1</sup> But, by taking it watchfully and prayerfully, she turned it

<sup>1</sup> Read Chapter XIX.

into an advantage. Her whole life, says her biographer, was one of self-sacrificing endeavour to do good to the souls and bodies of men. She lived not for herself, but for others, "always sparing of expense upon herself, that she might have the more to give the household of faith."

Her own account of her good fortune is very instructive. "My situation, as to outward things, is the most advantageous to a religious life that can be. I have no cares; indeed, I have no need of care. I have plenty of all I can want. Is it not plain that the Lord designs me to be one of those who are brought into close fellowship with Himself? May I not attain to a fuller salvation than when involved in all my perplexities?"

The Christian saint to whom reference is here made was the Miss Bosanquet who afterwards married the saintly Fletcher of Madeley. She was a worthy virgin, a happy wife, a noble widow.

The spirit of her life is admirably represented by the following quotation from her *Journal*:—

"I was led this morning to offer up my whole self to God.

“*First, my body*, for any suffering He saw good. I leave it all to Him.

“*Secondly, my reputation*—to be esteemed or despised.

“*Thirdly, my substance*—to be continued or withheld.

“*Fourthly, my soul*. I commit it altogether to the Lord. He knows that I want to be fully saved, and I will consider it as my own triumph. Lord, get Thyself this glory upon me !”

What could be a greater *Help Heavenward* than the frequent repetition of this vow? Here we have the practical force of “entire sanctification,” “complete consecration.”

There are two things to be noted in these experiences of Mrs. Fletcher. Notice how wisely she regards *both end and means*.

1. She has no uncertainty as to the object in view! I should always conquer. It is His will that I should always conquer.

One of the points for which the noble Patrick Hamilton died was that “no man is without sin, so long as he liveth.” Three centuries have carried us further

than that stern doctrine of Calvinism. Christians rejoice more trustfully now in the great words (1 Thess. iv. 3), "This is the will of God, even your sanctification."

2. But Mrs. Fletcher was quite as wise in regard to the means. She saw quite plainly that, if we were to live without sin, it could only be by yielding ourselves consciously, deliberately, unreservedly to the sanctifying God. And there is no question that, when we do this intelligently and sincerely, a contrite heart He will not despise; He will create in us a clean heart, and renew within us a right spirit; He will cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Another passage in this good lady's diary presents this truth in a very clear and interesting fashion. "At the class, as I was saying that it was **not any peculiar or sudden comforts that so tended to the soul's sanctification, as a constant abandonment and resignation of the whole soul, with every concern, into the hand of Jesus**—I felt in a moment such an insight into the love, faithfulness, and wisdom of

Christ as I cannot describe." She did not trust to "comforts" for sanctification, but she received and enjoyed them. Note the sequel.

**"Oh the security I saw in abandoning my soul to Him !** It was, for a moment, glorious indeed. I kept looking ; but it drew back as if a curtain was, for a moment, drawn up, discovering some glorious scene, and then gradually let down again. But it has left an increase of confidence."

Let us follow in her footsteps. Let us not despise comforts, but let us not trust in them. Let us determine that, by God's indwelling grace, we shall always conquer ; but let us never forget that, if this is to be our happy lot, we need ever, like Christ, to commit ourselves into the hands of a faithful, promise-keeping Creator—never to take the reins of our soul and temper and judgment into our own feeble hand.

## CHAPTER XXII

### Perfectly Happy

“I trust in the infinite mercy of my Almighty Creator. . . . The infirmities of age are so light to me that I am perfectly happy.”

So wrote a scientist ninety-one years old! She was the daughter of Admiral Sir William Fairfax, and was born at Jedburgh in 1780. She married first a commissioner in the Russian army, and afterwards Dr. William Somerville. In 1855 she received a pension of £300 from the Crown, in recognition of her services to the literature of physical science.

Many writers have spoken of the miseries of old age. She found old age a time of joy. “I am perfectly happy,” she wrote. Up to the day of her death she was engaged in revising and com-

pleting a treatise on the *Theory of Differences*. Then she laid aside her books and her pen, and passed away in her sleep.

Is not this life as it should be lived? In her ninety-second year her mind was active, and she maintained her interest in nature and history; and she was perfectly happy. For, near as death was, she knew that she could trust in the *infinite* mercy of her Almighty Creator. How richly is our trust in Him rewarded! If with a full heart we confide in His mercy, He banishes our fears, strengthens our weakness, turns the avenues of death into the path of life.

Two things deserve to be noted in the cheering experience of this distinguished lady. She combined the two things that perhaps most of all sweeten and elevate the soul—joy in unselfish work and trust in the all-pitiful Father. Christians would do well to cultivate such a living interest as she had in God's world—in nature and history—and to combine with that spring of refreshing thought the river of pleasure and confidence that wells up in the heart of him who sincerely trusts in the infinite mercy.

When John Smeaton, the great civil engineer, constructor of the famous Eddystone Lighthouse, came to the end of his long and active life, his heart was as peaceful as Mrs. Somerville's, but he gave expression to a somewhat different view of the great change in front.

He was born in 1724, died in 1792, and was for many years the consulting engineer for the whole nation. Towards the end he was attacked by paralysis, and spoke of himself as already nine-tenths dead and looking forward to his end.

But one day he was asked to explain some phenomena connected with the moon, and he replied, "How often have I looked up to it with inquiry and wonder! And how often have I looked forward to the period when **I shall have the vast and privileged views of an hereafter, and** ALL WILL BE COMPREHENSION and pleasure!"

Heaven is rest for the weary, but it is also strength for the strong. Some of the greatest scientists have joined with exultation in the words of the ancient Jewish missionary, "Now I know in



part, but then shall I know perfectly,<sup>1</sup> even as also I am known." Such, in fact, was the aspiration of the dying Smeaton.

Equally beautiful was his interpretation of the mental effects of his illness. He felt his quickness of apprehension waning, but he did not try to conceal the fact from himself or from others. He looked it bravely in the face and mastered it. With a touching smile he uttered the words, "It could not be otherwise. **The shadow must lengthen as the sun goes down.**"

Happy is he who knows that, while the shadow falls on the physical instrument of thought, a life is assuredly coming in which "all will be comprehension." The convictions that were wrought in the minds of these two great scientists rob death of his sting, and present him to us as our guide to endless strength and peace unspeakable.

<sup>1</sup> So in the Greek of 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### *Thee—Day and Night*

“O Lord, give me that love that never faileth.  
O Saviour, **show Thyself to us, that we  
may think of Thee day and night.**”

THIS is the prayer of a monk but not of an idle enthusiast. It is part of a prayer of Columban,<sup>1</sup> who is remarkable for this great triumph, that he knew how to unite the contemplative life with great activity in practical business.

He was born in the latter half of the sixth century in the Irish province of Leinster, and from his early youth was educated in the famous monastery of Bangor. At the age of thirty (about 573 A.D.) he felt impelled to seek a

<sup>1</sup> Not to be confounded with Columba of Iona, who also came from Ireland, but was probably twenty or thirty years older.

more extensive field of activity, to preach the gospel to the pagan nations on the Continent. His biographer says that Columban felt within him that fire which our Saviour came to kindle on earth.

His abbot, accordingly, gave him twelve young men as companions, and he crossed over the English Channel to the Frankish Kingdom. He was invited to stay, and consented. He chose a spot in the wilderness, among the Vosges Mountains, for two reasons. First, that by the toil necessary for reclaiming the land, his monks might gain a greater power of self-denial and control over their sensuous nature. Secondly, that an example of tilling the soil might be given to the untutored people. He hoped thus to incite them to imitate the monks, for *he counted the cultivation of the soil as the condition of all social improvement.*

It was a life of hardship. For several days they were obliged to sustain themselves on the bark of trees and on herbs. But, while he kept them toiling, he did not neglect prayer, and so wonderful were the answers that the people came to regard

him as a man extraordinarily favoured of God.

Very soon the little community excited attention and interest. The clergy in France were selfish and corrupt, and by the example of Columban and his friends a new enthusiasm for monasticism was spread through the land, and families of every rank committed their sons to him for education.

The spirit and thoughts of the man are evident from the education he gave them. He kept them at severe labour, to inure them to hardness and self-mastery, and so enable them to overcome the great difficulty of living a Christian life among savages. He required of every monk “that *he should retire to his couch weary, that he should be able to take sleep while travelling, and that he should be forced to awake before his sleep was quite over.*”

This was a man who watched externals, who worked for physical health and manliness. But the internals held a still greater place in his heart. He used to retire from his convent into the dense forest with a copy of the Holy Scriptures

on his shoulders,<sup>1</sup> and there obtain solitude for study. One prayer of his that has been handed down shows how fruitful his spiritual studies had been.

“O Lord, give me, I beseech Thee, in the name of Jesus Christ Thy Son, my God, that **love** which never faileth, that my light may be kindled and never quenched, **that it may burn in me and give light to others.** .

“And Thou, O Christ, our dearest Saviour, do Thou, Thyself, constantly kindle our lamps, that they may shine evermore in Thy temple. My Jesus, I beseech Thee, give Thy light to my lamp, that I may continually contemplate Thee only, long for Thee, gaze on Thee, and yearn for Thee in love. O Saviour, full of love, show Thyself to us that knock, that we may perceive and love Thee alone, **think of Thee day and night, that Thy love, which many waters cannot quench, may possess our whole souls,** and never more be quenched by the waters of earth.”

This is a beautiful prayer, and he who

<sup>1</sup> Books—manuscripts—were so often cumbersome in those days.

prays it frequently, and lives in its spirit, cannot but be beautiful too. In those dark ages the heart of this abbot was set on thinking of Jesus, day and night. Can *we* do better? To help ourselves heavenward, is it not the wisest thing we can do, to run our race, *looking unto* Jesus? These three petitions let us often repeat, with all the earnestness and power we possess—

1. O Lord, give me that love which never faileth.

2. O Saviour, show Thyself to us.

3. May we think of Thee day and night, that Thy love may possess our whole souls.

“Old friends, old scenes, will lovelier be,  
As more of heaven—and Christ is heaven—  
in each we see :  
Some softening gleam of love and prayer  
Shall dawn on every cross and care.”

## CHAPTER XXIV

### *The Scratched Conscience*

“I trust in the living God, that, before my conscience shall get that much of a scratch, this neck shall go for it.”

THESE are not elegant words, but they express the thought of a soul that was truly heroic. Thomas Hogg, one of the most remarkable men of his age, was the speaker. He was the child of Highland parents, and was born in Tain in the year 1628. He became a conscientious Presbyterian minister, and in the year 1662, when some thirty-four years of age, he, like many other faithful ministers, was ejected from his charge because of his “non-submission to Papacy.” From that time he became the victim of a long series of persecutions.

Thirteen or fourteen years after, he

was for the second time apprehended for preaching the gospel, or "keeping conventicles" as it was called. He was sent to Edinburgh, and there he told how his capture had affected him.

"I thank my God," he said, "this messenger was most welcome to me." Then, like one of the ancient Jewish prophets, he proceeded to emphasise his message by symbolical deed. Giving the wall of his prison a scratch with his nail, he cried, "I trust in the living God, that, before my conscience shall get that much of a scratch, this neck"—and as he spoke he pointed vividly to that part of his body—"shall go for it."

They were not empty words, for in those "dark days," as they have been called, it became a not unfrequent event for a Covenanter to seal his fidelity with his blood. Thomas Hogg was soon brought to trial, refused to refrain from preaching, was bundled off to the prison on the lonely Bass Rock.

His courage and cheerfulness were of priceless comfort to the preachers confined there, but the close confinement brought on a dangerous illness. A physician was



called in, and he said that unless Mr. Hogg was liberated there was no hope of his recovery.

The preacher hesitated about petitioning the "mongrel court" at Edinburgh. He was determined *he would not scratch his conscience*. But the physician took the matter into his own hands, drew up a strong petition, and, to ensure a hearing, paid the clerk's dues liberally.

Some of the lay-lords interceded for Hogg, and declared that he had lived more quietly than others and did not traverse the country so much. But Archbishop Sharp took a different view. He said, "*The prisoner does, and is in a capacity to do, more hurt to our interests, sitting in his elbow chair, than twenty others could do by travelling from this land to the other; and if the justice of God is pursuing him to take him off the stage, the clemency of the Government should not interpose to hinder it; and it is my opinion, that if there be any place in the prison worse than another he should be put there.*"

The motion was put and carried, and immediately put into execution:—THE

CLOSEST PRISON IN THE BASS FOR HIM. His faithful servant, William Balloch, was with him, and as the suffering preacher was carried to a low and nasty dungeon, the servant fell a-weeping and cried, "Now, master, your death is unavoidable."

The martyr's face lighted up with joy as he answered, "Now that men have no mercy, the Lord will show Himself merciful; from the moment of my entering this dungeon, I date my recovery."

And, strange to say, so it fell out. The very next day he was wonderfully better, and in a short space was as well as ever.

From that time forth, when any one spoke of Archbishop Sharp in his hearing, he used to betray no resentment, but would smile pleasantly and say, "Commend *him* to me for a good physician."

This episode is very characteristic of the man. It brings to light his grim humour, his staunch integrity, his unfailing faith. The hard and the soft were splendidly combined in him. To himself he was hard. He would have no mercy

upon an easy-going conscience. Unless a course of action were indisputably right, he would have nothing to do with it. "Before my conscience shall get that much of a scratch, this neck shall go for it."

But with all his harshness towards himself, how tender he was in his thoughts of God and men! When King Charles II. some years later offered indulgences to Romanists and Nonconformists, the sturdy Presbyterian judged it better to jeopard his life by preaching in the fields rather than take shelter under that "ensnaring gourd." But he would not condemn his brethren for judging differently. His biographer describes it beautifully. "Upon all occasions he *expressed a just regard to the image of Christ wherever he saw it*, and was utterly against withdrawing from Presbyterian ministers who either had not taken the benefit of the indulgence, or, having taken it, were afterwards ejected, and exposed to suffering for their integrity."

And when the persecuted old man came to his end, in the midst of severe

physical pain, he showed a touching tenderness of spirit. His servant asked him why he moaned, whether it was for bodily or spiritual pain. He replied, "pleasantly and composedly"—

"No soul-trouble, man; for a hundred and a hundred times my Lord hath assured me that I shall be with Him for ever; but I am making moan for my body."

Towards his end he was *much feasted* with our Saviour's comfortable message to His disciples: "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and to your God" (John xx. 17). Two of his last sayings are worthy of long remembrance: "I cannot give a look to the Lord, but I am *fully persuaded of His everlasting love.*" "Never did the sun in the firmament shine more brightly to the eyes of my body, than *Christ the Sun of Righteousness hath shined on my soul.*" At the very end, he departed with the gladsome shout: "My Lord is come; praises, praises to Him for ever more. Amen."

The true Christian has a most tender conscience, for consciences are like

mirrors: the more delicate they are, the more easily are they scratched. "The Prince of this world cometh—and hath NOTHING in Me." So said He whose conscience was free from flaw—He who not only did, but *knew* no sin, who was undefiled. But it was He who revolted from the faintest approach to cowardice. "Get thee behind me, SATAN," He ejaculated to St. Peter, when the apostle suggested that there was no necessity to face the opposers at Jerusalem.

O Christian, have a wholesome dread of scratches on the conscience. For the more you scratch it with irregularities, the more its brightness is dimmed and the coarser its messages become.

True, it is a pain to have a sensitive conscience, but it is a privilege. It was surely with this truth in mind that the familiar lines were penned—

"They who fain would serve Thee best  
Are conscious most of wrong within."

There are many practices that appear innocent to thousands, and yet they scratch and bleed the Christian conscience. A keen debater may perhaps show that

there is no actual sin in promiscuous dancing, theatre-going, card-playing. But the question that we each have to settle is, *WILL IT SCRATCH MY CONSCIENCE?* Will it make me more easy-going, more careless about pleasing Christ in everything?

Take one example. No broad-minded Christian would condemn every smoker of tobacco as a sinner. Yet many youthful consciences, we believe, have been "scratched" by yielding too readily to the invitations of smokers. If the main plea is self-indulgence, as against self-restraint and self-mastery, it is perilous in the extreme for a young man or a boy to hand himself over to a habit that in the majority of cases seems to be a merciless tyranny.

The melancholy effects of such scratches on the conscience are very apparent in the moral indifference of thousands of professing Christians. Why do they, for example, read novels, travel in trains on Sundays? Because they are deliberately convinced that it is wise and right to do so? No, but rather because other Christians do so. But if the proper

dignity of each Christian soul is to be preserved, we must each of us judge for himself, and refuse at all costs to dim the clearness of our conscience by roughly discarding its teaching.

## CHAPTER XXV

### Feeling God's Hand

“I have felt His hand upon me in great trials,  
and submitted to His guidance.”

It was no less a man than Abraham Lincoln, the famous President of the United States, who used these words. It has been thought by some that he had no real belief in religion or God. His words and actions prove the opposite.

The saying quoted above was uttered at one of the great crises of his life. He had begun life as a backwoodsman; became lawyer, afterwards legislator, and at length President of the United States, at a time that demanded the utmost ability and energy.

On the 4th of March 1861 he was installed as President. Five weeks later the great Civil War was begun by the



upholders of slavery in the South. The year that followed was a time of fearful trial and responsibility for the Administration.

In June 1862 the Southern army was successful in getting between the seat of Government (Washington) and the Northern army—the army of the Potomac. No news was to be obtained; the worst was feared, and not without good reason.

At that dark hour Senator J. F. Wilson and some friends called on Lincoln. They found him in a very dejected condition. But one of them remarked emphatically that, if only the nation would do right, Providence would restore its unity and prosperity. This remark went home to Lincoln's heart; he rose to his feet, paused a moment, and then, stretching his right arm towards the speaker, gave utterance to the faith that was sustaining him, and as he spoke his face glowed like the face of a prophet.

“My faith,” said he, “is greater than yours. I not only believe that if we do right, God will lead us safely out of this wilderness and restore our dissevered union, but I also believe that *He will*

*compel us to do right*, in order that He may do these things. Not so much because we desire them, as that they accord with His plans of dealing with this nation, in the midst of which HE MEANS TO ESTABLISH JUSTICE. I think He means that *we shall do more than we have yet done in furtherance of His plans*, and He will open the way for our doing it. **I have felt His hand upon me in great trials, and submitted to His guidance**, and I trust that as He shall further open the way I will be ready to walk therein, relying on His help and trusting in His goodness."

He resumed his seat, and his dejection was gone. With cheerful confidence he continued: "The army of the Potomac is necessary to our success, and, though the case at this moment looks dark, I can but hope and believe that we will soon have news from it relieving our anxiety. Sometimes it seems *necessary that we should be confronted with perils* which threaten us with disaster, in order that we may not get puffed up and forget Him who has much work for us yet to do. I hope our present case is no more than this, and

that a bright morning will follow the dark hour that now fills us with alarm. Indeed, my faith tells me it will be so."

His faith was justified. During the day tidings were at last received from the army, and in a short time the battle of Malvern Hill averted the threatened disaster. On 22nd September 1862 he proclaimed that, on the first day of the next year, all slaves in the States would be declared free. On the 1st of January 1863 he signed the final proclamation. In July the war turned decisively against the South. In 1864 he was re-elected as President, and in April of the following year he was assassinated.

The episode described is full of instruction. At first sight it might appear as if Lincoln had been warmed by his own eloquence, and by that means had dissipated his fears.

But look at it from the scriptural standpoint, and it wears a different aspect. With perfect exactness he obeyed the divine injunction, "Look unto ME and be ye saved." To have faith in God, to "submit to His guidance" as Lincoln puts it, to believe that God means to

establish justice, and expects us to further His plans,—all this is what God asks and commands us to do ; and, when we have complied with the divine directions, it is no wonder that we are “ saved ” from our fears, that we find our hearts cheered, and our will—the determination to speed the right at all costs—strengthened. There have been few clearer fulfilments of the words of the old book : “ Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. *In all thy ways acknowledge Him*, and HE SHALL DIRECT THY PATHS.”

But the chief gain in considering this episode in American history will be found, not so much in understanding the fact itself as in applying its teaching to our personal career. Do *we* feel God's hand upon our life ?

Some years ago a book was widely circulated that bore the title of *God's Hand in History*. Such a subject is always instructive. By the perusal of such works as Brace's *Gesta Christi*, and the *Divine Origin of Christianity* by Dr. Storrs, we can discover signs of the direct presence of the divine in human history,

and this is delightfully stimulating and impressive.

But there is a subtler and sublimer discovery that every Christian should make. We should seek to feel God's hand, not only in the concerns of nations, but on our individual career. No Christian should rest content until he can say with Lincoln, "I have felt His hand upon ME."

Fanatics in all ages have carried this view too far. Even to-day we hear it too often said by indiscreet Christian workers, "God told me so-and-so; God has sent me to say this or that." But because a few in their presumption are too sure of the presence of the hand of God, it does not justify the majority in not being sure enough. Men like Cromwell and Lincoln have made their lives sublime, because they felt certain they were doing the will of the Most High. This uplifting conviction needs to be cultivated by all Christians, while at the same time they persistently cherish a discreet fear of self, of self-importance and self-will.

How, then, can I come to feel the hand of God in *my* life? The great means is

prayer — committing the events of our worldly life definitely, distinctly, to the overruling choice of God. “I submitted to His guidance,” says Lincoln. In all his duties he was willing that God should *direct* his paths.

One choice means of finding the firm pressure of the Father's hand upon us is to take an active, practical share in Christian work. Select some persons within your reach who need the sweetening influence of God's Spirit. Pray for them by name, day by day, and work for their salvation whenever opportunity offers. If you have half a dozen such names on your prayer list, and pray for them regularly and trustfully, it will not be long before we find that the power of God has fallen upon one or other of them *in a way that you had not expected*. He alone doeth great marvels; and you will rejoice, not only that the grace of God is beautifying another soul, but also that God has been leading you to assist in bringing the great change about. It is one of the highest joys of life, if indeed it is not the very highest, when we can say of such moral changes, “*God means to establish justice.*”

*He means that we shall do more than we have yet done in furtherance of His plans. He will open the way for our doing it. I have felt His hand upon me, and submitted to His guidance."*

## CHAPTER XXVI

### The Chosen Hour

“ God will still preserve me alive, until my death shall be better for His glory and mine own felicity.”

IN the year 1601 Bartholomew Copin, one of the Waldenses, was at Asti in Piedmont, upon some business, at one of the fairs which are still common in those parts. He was seized and called to account before the bishop for having made a confession of his religion, the evening before, while sitting at table with other traders. He was sentenced to be cast into prison, and was eventually burned.

But, during his confinement, his wife and son were allowed to visit him. He gave them loving advice, and, to deepen its effect, repeated it in a quaint and



touching letter containing the sentence cited at the head of this chapter.

“TO MY LOVING COMPANION, SUSAN  
COPIN, AT THE TOWN OF LUCERNE.

“MOST DEAR COMPANION, — *I have received much comfort by your coming into this place, and so much the more, by how much the less I expected it. I think it was much comfort to yourself that you had the means to sup with me, as it came to pass but yesterday, being the 15th of September, in the year 1601, being Saturday.*

*“I know not the cause why this was permitted, but all things are in the hands of God, and whatsoever was the cause I do not think we shall ever eat together again. Therefore, pray unto God to be your Comforter, and put your trust in Him who has promised never to forsake those who trust in Him.*

*“You are wise. Therefore, govern our house in such sort that you keep our children, Samuel and Martha, in obedience; whom I command, by that authority that God hath given unto me, to be faithful and obedient unto you, for then God will bless them.*

*“For the rest, be not grieved concerning myself. For if God has appointed that I am to come to the end of my days, and that I shall render up my soul, which He hath long time lent me, my trust in Him is, that out of His abundant mercy He will receive it into heaven, for the love of His Son*

*Jesus Christ, by whom I believe that our sins are blotted out, even by His precious death and passion.*

*"Take no care to send me anything these three weeks, and then you may send, if you please, some money to pay the jailor, and something else to succour me, if I live till then. Remember also that which I have often told you, that God prolonged the life of King Hezekiah for fifteen years, but has prolonged mine a great deal more, for it is a long time ago that you have seen me in a manner dead. Nevertheless, I am yet alive, and I hope and hold for certain, that He will preserve me alive until my death shall be better for His glory and mine own felicity, through His grace and mercy towards me.*

"FROM THE PRISON AT ASTI,  
"September 16th, 1601."

This letter speaks for itself. The Piedmontese saints held their lives in their hands. Half a century after—1655—our blind singer, John Milton, prayed for them—

"Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints, whose bones

Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;  
Even them who kept Thy truth so pure of old,  
When all our fathers worshipt stocks and stones.  
Forget not! In Thy book record their groans  
Who were Thy sheep."

But, in the simple letter of this patient martyr, there is one truth that needs stamping on the heart of every Christian. The hour of death is a CHOSEN HOUR. We are too often led to suppose that death comes without much arrangement on the part of our Lord, that it depends very often upon the germs of disease that happen to be flying around us.

But if it is true of all our life, that in it and over it the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, it is as true of the last hour of that life. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without our Father. If God controls the dying fall of the tiny sparrow, much more will He delay or hasten the dying hour of His saints, according to the counsels of unsearchable wisdom and love.

It is unchristian to speak of any true Christians being cut off in the midst of their days, to imply that the death of any consecrated saint is premature. By self-will we may hasten our end. But in other cases, where we trust in the Lord with all our heart, HE CHOOSES THE HOUR, and chooses it wisely and well. "Precious in

the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints " (Psalm cxvi. 15) means that it is no light thing in the sight of God that His servants should perish.

Here, then, is priceless comfort for us. Let us take it home to our individual soul. *The hour of my death is already fixed. But it is fixed by the All-wise and All-loving.* It is my privilege to say with the simple-hearted Waldensian, "God will preserve me alive until my death shall be better." Eternal wisdom has selected for me THE MOST FRUITFUL HOUR IN WHICH I CAN DIE.

" Unappalled by guilty fear,  
Through the mortal vale I go ;  
My eternal Life is near ;  
THEE, MY LIFE IN DEATH, I know ;  
Bless the chastening, cheering rod,  
Die into the arms of God.

Love divine shall still embrace,  
Love shall keep me to the end ;  
Surely all my happy days  
I shall in Thy temple spend,  
Till I to Thy house remove,  
Thy eternal house above !"

## CHAPTER XXVII

### *Open your own Letters*

“When you read your name on the superscription of this letter, you make no scruple to open it. Why, then, do you hesitate at embracing the promises of the Gospel?”

So wrote the saintly John Newton to one of his correspondents. Such advice never came from a more unlikely quarter, if we judge him by his early years. It is true that, before he was sixteen years of age, he had three or four times taken up and laid aside a religious profession. But, when he was eighteen years old, he entered upon a mad career.

First (1742) he became infatuated with a girl of fourteen, who became his wife seven or eight years after. During the interval this infatuation was one mysterious restraint that saved him from

final ruin. "Though I neither feared God nor regarded man, *I could not bear that she should think meanly of me when I was dead.*"

He impetuously frustrated the efforts his father made in his behalf; and, when at length he was made midshipman, he resisted all order and control, and so disgraced himself that he was captured as a deserter, was stript, whipt, and degraded.

For five or six years he delighted in wickedness, was persuaded there was no life after death, and not only sinned with a high hand himself, but made it his study to seduce others upon every occasion.

He settled for two years on the West Coast of Africa. But, for the first year at least, he was shunned and despised, there being few of the negroes themselves who did not think themselves *too good to speak to him.*

It was this man that the grace of God followed and reclaimed, and, from being a ringleader in profanity and sin, he became the friend and comforter of William Cowper the poet, and one of the recognised saints and Christian leaders of his day.

The great change is admirably described in his own words:—"I stood in need of an Almighty Saviour, and such a one I found described in the New Testament." And thus was he qualified for pointing out to others the way to true peace ; and when a lady of a fearful, doubting cast of mind wrote to him, he knew at once the help she needed, for he had profited by it himself.

"How must I attempt your comfort? Not by leading you to look into your own heart for something in yourself, whereon to ground your hopes. Let me invite you to look unto Jesus. You read His promises every day. *Why should you doubt their being fulfilled?*

"You can hardly believe they belong to you. Consider if many of the promises are not EXPRESSLY DIRECTED to those to whom they belong. When you read your name on the superscription of this letter, you make no scruple to open it: why, then, do you hesitate at embracing the promises of the gospel? They are addressed to those who mourn, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who are poor in spirit ; and you cannot

but be sensible that a gracious God has begun to work these dispositions in your heart."

We are convinced that the weakness of the religion of quite half the number of professing Christians is in a large measure due to the fact that they have not intelligently learned the lesson that John Newton taught so plainly. Their fellowship with God, their joy in Christ, would be vastly richer if they would take some of the promises, week by week, and say pointedly to their own soul, "This is for ME; this is true for ME."

1. WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY.

2. GOD GIVETH GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

3. IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN HIM.

4. YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER GIVETH THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THEM THAT ASK HIM.

5. COME UNTO ME, ALL YE THAT LABOUR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST.

Is there a single prayerful soul who can doubt that these promises are true for



*him?* And each morning as we pray, if we wish to make sure of a blessing, there are certainly these five blessings within our reach—five blessings which it is our daily duty to make sure of—

1. The water of life.
2. God's grace.
3. Wisdom.
4. The Holy Spirit.
5. Rest.

O reader, how rich is our privilege! Not one day in our life need we pass without possessing each and all of these precious things.

Let us study such gracious letters oftener. Let us make a list of those that we know to be *ours*—the letters that we feel sure are addressed to *us*. And let us frequently reopen them and read them, to the gladness of our soul and the strengthening of our life. Hesitate not to embrace the promises of the gospel: open your own letters.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### *My Christ*

**"He that was Paul's Christ is my  
Christ too."**

IN September 1658 Oliver Cromwell lay a-dying. The fatal weakness had laid hold on him, when he asked his attendant to read to him from the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians.

The passage was read containing the verse, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." The dying conqueror frankly but pensively pondered it over. He said—

"It's true, Paul, *you* have learned this and attained to this measure of grace. But what shall *I* do? Ah, poor creature, it is a hard lesson for me to take out!"

But when the 13th verse was read,  
"I can do all things through Christ that

strengtheneth me," he found a new comfort and said quietly to himself, "**He that was Paul's Christ is my Christ too.**"

What satisfaction in such a thought! How it stilled the turbulent anxieties of the Protector's active spirit! "My CHRIST. I shall be content with my state whatever it may be."

The days passed, and he grew weaker and weaker. At last his wife and children stood watching around his deathbed, and he said—

"Children, live like Christians. I leave you the Covenant to feed upon. . . . The Lord hath filled me with as much assurance of His pardon, and His love, as my soul can hold. . . . I think **I am the poorest wretch that lives. But I love God or, rather, am beloved of God.** . . . I am a conqueror, through Christ that strengtheneth me."

How sublime are these words! But supreme in strength is his thought of the legacy left behind him. What was to happen to his wife and family? Ruin and shame at the hands of the dissolute Stuarts? Or unsubverted power and use-

fulness, till death brought them home to Paradise?

*No matter which.* I leave you the Covenant to feed upon! Paul's Christ is my Christ too.

Herein lay the triumph of the slain conqueror, that he knew he was covenanted with Christ, and he had endeavoured to bring his family within that covenant too. What a comfort for one's dying hour! To be able to say to our dearest, "I can do no more for you. But Paul's Christ is my Christ too, and I leave you the Covenant to feed upon." O legacy of passing preciousness! May every reader be able to pass away with some such conviction upholding him.

Only two and a half years later, in the March of 1661, a hero of a very different type came to his end, but with the same thought as Cromwell.

Samuel Rutherford, the famous Presbyterian preacher and divinity professor, had written too plainly against Prelacy, and as he lay upon his deathbed he received a summons to appear for judgment in Edinburgh, on a charge of high treason. It filled his brave heart not with shrinking

but with regret. Said he, "I would think it *a more glorious way of going home*, to lay down my life for the cause at the Cross of Edinburgh or St. Andrews; but *I submit* to my Master's will." How sore a disappointment that he could not be hanged!

During this last illness his stout heart was sustained by the very comfort that upheld Cromwell. We are told by his biographer that he often broke out in a kind of sacred rapture, exalting and commending the Lord Jesus, especially when his end drew near.

Some days before his death he said, "Mine eyes shall see MY REDEEMER—these very eyes of mine and none other for me."

The last day but one before he died, three gentlewomen called upon him. He spoke to them of Christ. "My honourable Master and lovely Lord," he said, "my great, royal King, hath not a match in heaven or earth. I have my own guilt, even like other simple men, but **He hath pardoned, loved, washed, and given me joy unspeakable and full of glory.** I repent not that I owned His cause."

The gentlewomen left him, and several brother-ministers called. He welcomed them, but could not get away from his one engrossing theme. He told *them*—

“My Lord and Master is the chief of ten thousand. None is comparable to HIM in heaven or earth.

“Dear brethren, do all for HIM.

“Pray—for Christ. Preach—for Christ. Feed the flock committed to your charge—for Christ. **Do all for Christ.**”

There we have the final advice of a master-preacher to his brethren. Dear brethren, do all for Christ.

But does it not apply with similar force to every lover of the Lord? St. Paul thought so—(Col. iii. 17), “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, **do all in the name of the Lord Jesus**”; (Col. iii. 23), “Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as **TO THE LORD.**” These words are not addressed to bishops or cardinals, to priests or preachers, but to ordinary Christians, and, in the last instance, even to *slaves*.

The next morning Samuel Rutherford was very weak. He received a visit from his friend Mr. Blair. But his theme was

still the same. "Mine eyes shall see MY REDEEMER. I stand at the best pass that ever a man did; Christ is mine and I am His."

Supreme happiness! What is it? I have it, says the staunch Covenanter, and it is this—"CHRIST IS MINE and I am His."

In the afternoon he felt that his end was come, and ejaculated—

"Oh that all my brethren may know what a Master I have served and what peace I have this day! This night shall close the door and put my anchor within the veil."

His son was present, but Rutherford had just the confidence that the great Protector had had. "I have again left you UPON THE LORD. It may be that you will tell this to others—that the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage."

And thus, as his biographer quaintly and touchingly describes it, "*by five o'clock, as he himself foretold, it was said unto him, 'COME UP HITHER'; and he gave up the ghost, and the renowned eagle took its flight unto*

THE MOUNTAINS OF SPICES."

It has been said by a recent writer that personal love for Jesus Christ has never been expressed in Christian literature as by Samuel Rutherford. He is the leading expert in the highest science. For his was the joy of speaking most joyously of the Saviour's love. No other writer's pen has been able to touch so warmly and lovingly upon that grandest of themes.

But how, do you suppose, was he qualified for this choicest task? Was it not by saying to his heart continually, Christ is MY REDEEMER? Death had no terror for him, and eternity was joy, for his heart was full of Christ.

For contentment, let the Christian whisper to his heart — "Paul's Christ, Cromwell's Christ, Rutherford's Christ, is MY CHRIST."

For joy, let the Christian whisper to his heart—"Paul's Christ is MY CHRIST."

For fearless courage, even in the eye of death, let the Christian whisper to his heart—"Paul's Christ, Cromwell's Christ, Rutherford's Christ, is MY CHRIST."



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For fearless courage, even in the eye of death, let the Christian whisper to his heart—"Paul's Christ, Cromwell's Christ, Rutherford's Christ, is MY CHRIST."

Let each say—"My soul now sees my Redeemer—this very soul of mine and none other for me. Paul's Christ is MY CHRIST. And 'Christ (of God) is made unto me wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.'<sup>1</sup> All this for ME. He is MY CHRIST. Praise be to God!"

AMEN.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. i. 30.



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